



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

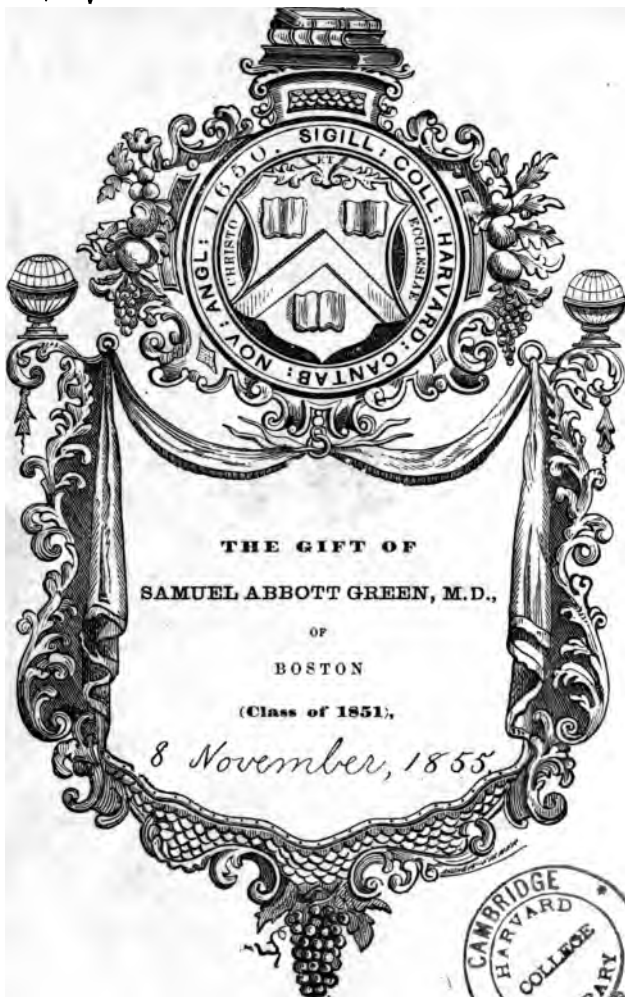
Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

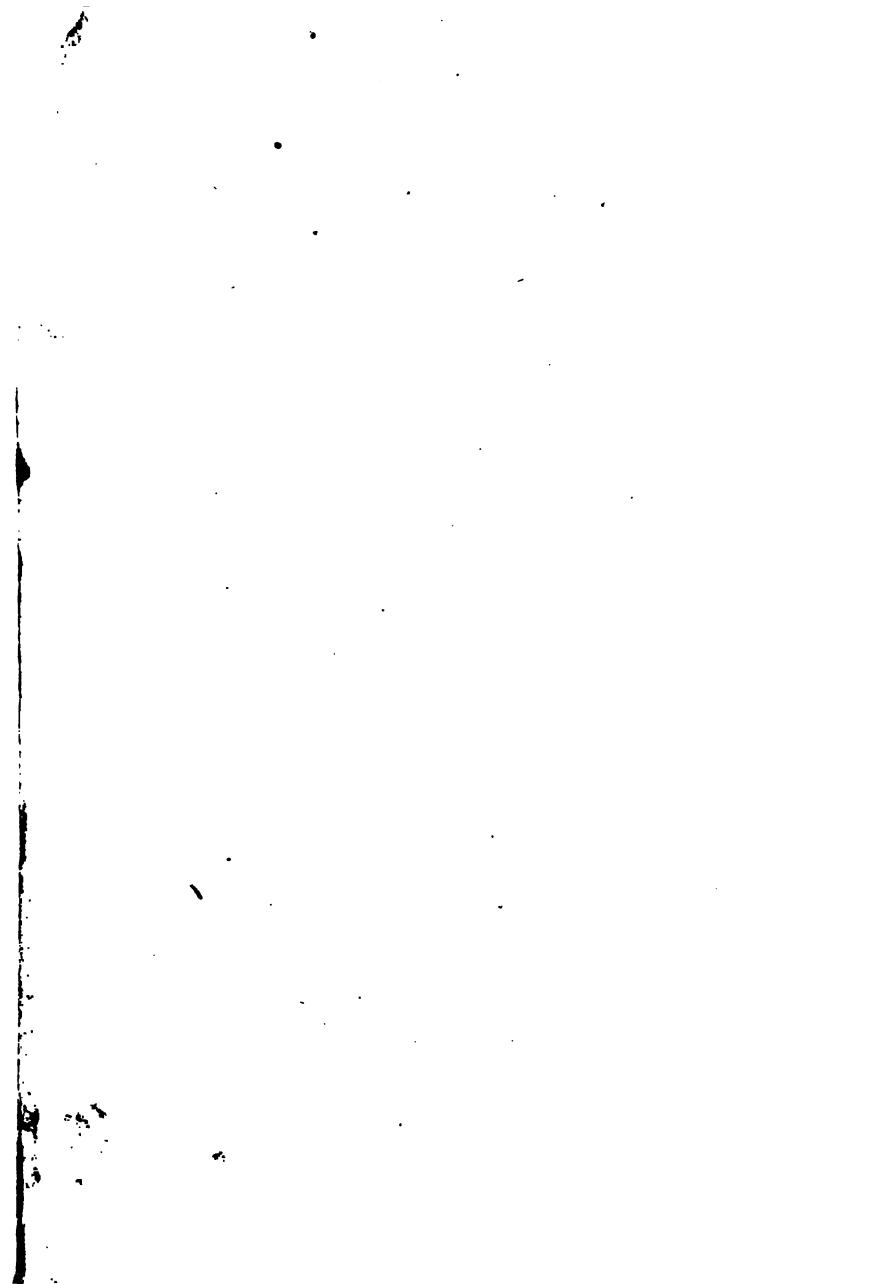
US
13187
25.15

96

US 13187.25.15

Ed. Nov. 1







2

SIX HOURS IN A CONVENT:

—OR—

THE STOLEN NUNS!

A TALE OF CHARLESTOWN IN 1834.

BY CHARLES W. FROTHINGHAM.

**—
EIGHTH EDITION.
—**

**GRAVES & WESTON:
OFFICE "AMERICAN UNION," 36 WASHINGTON ST., BOSTON.
1855.**

US13187.25,15

1855 Nov 8

list

Saml A. Green, decd

of Boston, 1/8 Jan 1855

[Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1855, by GRAVES & WESTON, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the District of Massachusetts.]

PREFACE TO EIGHTH EDITION.

After seven very large editions of "Six Hours in a Convent" had been sold, it was found that the public, like Oliver, persisted in "asking for more." No alternative was left but to "set up" the story anew, and issue a *eighth* edition. All of Mr. Frothingham's "Convent stories" have been well received, and have gained the author a wide and well deserved popularity. The single fact that a near relative of his was an inmate of the Convent at Charlestown, in 1834, is deemed sufficient to substantiate all statements presented the public as facts.



SIX HOURS IN A CONVENT.

CHAPTER I.

FAMILY AFFAIRS.

I have lived for years, many years, in Charlestown. In the same place my ancestors resided long before I was born, and on Bunker Hill my grandfather shed his blood, and while wounded and trodden under foot by a hireling soldier, thanked God that he suffered for liberty, and then closing his eyes, he slept a sleep that knows no waking, save when we shall all be judged according to our merits.

My father was then but a child, hardly able to walk by clinging to his mother's skirts; but as he grew up, and understood the precious legacy bequeathed to him by that band of revolutionary heroes who so boldly confronted the trained veterans of England, he became a sworn foe to all oppression and tyranny, ever ready to battle for the weak, and protect the innocent. At night he would call my sister and myself to his side, and endeavor to instil into our minds principles of equality and a love of freedom. Although the old gentleman was rich, too rich to hope for a quiet life, and could boast of the best blood in the land flowing in his veins, yet he heartily detested the mushroom aristocracy that was continually spring-

ing up and seeking to vie with the nobility of Europe in the splendor of their establishments.

I was but twenty years of age when my father died, leaving a mother, a young sister and myself to mourn his loss. After his death, I was advised to take a trip to Europe, and endeavor to repair my health, which had been seriously affected by severe studies at Harvard University. I felt unwilling to undertake the journey and leave my mother and sister alone, but an assurance on the part of my friends that they would watch over them as carefully as I could myself, induced me to consent, and with many protestations of writing by every packet ship, I left my native land with a heavy heart, and with the intention of being absent for three years.

CHAPTER II.

THE SURPRISE.

I shall not enter into a history of my wanderings—the temptations I was exposed to—the strange sights I witnessed, or the adventures which I encountered. Weary with travel, I resolved to return home, and without writing, I once more embarked on board a packet ship bound for Boston, and after a long passage I landed without a relative knowing I was in the land that gave me birth.

How well do I recollect the feelings of joy I experienced, as I called to mind the familiar objects with which I had been acquainted when I left. The old State House at the head of State street, appeared like a dear friend, and every passer-by seemed as a brother.

I could not spend precious moments, however, looking at inanimate objects, for I thought of my mother and sister. Hailing a passing carriage, I sprang in, gave the coachman directions where to leave me, and leaned back in the vehicle with feelings impossible to describe, as I anticipated the surprise of many friends.

I did not notice that the coachman put up the steps and let them down two or three times, and appeared rather reluctant to start. Yet the delay at length attracted my attention, and as I looked towards the driver, I found that he was staring hard at me.

"Well," I cried, impatiently, "when are you going to start?"

"Excuse your pardon, sir," the man replied, "but didn't you say you wanted to go to the Frothingham mansion, Charlestown?"

"That is what I said," I replied.

"And are you the young gentleman who has been absent in Europe for such a long time?"

"I have been in Europe for some time past. But why do you ask?"

"And is your name Frothingham?" the man said, without paying any attention to my question.

"That is my name—but—"

"Thank God, but I am afraid you are too late," the coachman said, fastening the door, and springing to his seat.

"Stop," I cried. "Why am I too late? Give me some explanation for your words."

The driver made no reply, but applied the whip to his horses and dashed through the streets as though he was on an errand of life and death.

The man's words were mysterious, and I puzzled my brain to understand them. Could my mother be sick? or was my sister in danger? Before I had settled in my mind which it was, the coach had rolled rapidly over the bridge, and in a few minutes stopped before the Frothingham mansion.

I looked at the ancient house with joy at the first glance, but the second was sufficient to show me that some change had taken place during my absence. The blinds on the front part of the house were closed and covered with dust—the huge knocker, with the family coat of arms in relief at the top, had lost its polish and was grimed with dust—the marble door-steps were black with dirt, and looked as though not a footstep had touched them since I stood there and bade my family adieu, three years before.

I had no time to notice farther neglect. The driver let the steps down with a crash, and I sprang out, grasped the knocker and gave a few blows with it, that sent the dust flying about my face in clouds, and drew many a head to the neighboring windows in astonishment.

No answer being returned to my first salute, I once more awoke

the echoes, and then listened patiently for a servant to come to the door. In a few minutes I heard slipshod feet, and after some trouble the bolts were withdrawn, and the rough, repulsive features of an Irish girl were exposed to view, as she peered through the small space opened, as though determined to be on her guard, and prevent a forcible entrance.

"What in the devil do ye want, that ye should be after making all the noise for?" the menial said, her eyes flashing with rage.

"Is Mrs. Frothingham at home?" I asked, calmly, for I saw that the girl was a stranger, and had not lived in the family when I was at home.

"She is at home, but sure she can't see the likes of ye, when at this blessed minute she is confessing her sins and making her will. Get ye gone, and come back to-morrow," and the girl attempted to close the door in my face, but I set my shoulders against it and prevented her; at the same time I heard a chuckling laugh from the coachman, as he said:

"Well, this is rather queer. The master comes home, and a servant shuts the door in his face. That is the effect of priestcraft."

I heard his words, and my blood boiled as a suspicion entered my mind. I stepped back one pace and threw my whole weight against the door, and the next instant the girl was staggering along entry, and I crossed the threshold.

CHAPTER III.

I BREAK UP A NICE LITTLE PARTY.

"You'll be sorry for this," muttered the girl, with a revengeful look, when she saw that I was not to be kept out of my own house.

"Tell me in what room my mother is," I said, sternly.

"Your mother! eh, divil a bit did I know that ye was the young master. If ye plase, I'll tell the ledy ye is here," and she started to do so, when I laid one hand on her arm and drew her back.

"Stay here—I'll announce myself. But first inform me who is with my mother."

"Faith, sir, nobody but father Andre and Malony, two of the piouses of the Catholic clargy. Oh! yer mother is in good hands, never fear ye!"

Priests in my father's house! A religion that he always warned me against finding votaries in my family! The thought was agony. Pushing the girl aside, I darted up stairs and walked hastily towards the room in which I supposed the party were assembled. Before reaching the door, however, I thought it would be as well to know what was going on, without the party being aware of my presence.

There was a small room adjoining the one which my mother and the priests occupied, and which had always been used as a

library. This room I entered, and could plainly hear the voices of men and the never forgotten tones of my mother, in earnest consultation.

By the aid of a chair I was enabled to look through the glass windows over the door, and for a few minutes I watched the proceedings with great interest. The two men and my mother were seated at a small table, on which a number of papers were spread, with pens and ink near at hand. Mother was reading a paper when I first took my position, and I thought I observed the priests exchange significant glances while her eyes were on the paper she held. At length, after satisfying herself of the contents of the document, the lady said,

"By my signing this, the whole of the property which my daughter inherited from her father reverts to the Convent of St. Ursula."

"All that is needed is your signature. Your *late* daughter is already ordained, and need I again tell you how joyfully she relinquished all claims upon the estate in favor of our glorious order. Every day that she has been in the convent has added to her happiness, and now she only desires that you should become an inmate, to throw all thought of the world aside forever, and devote yourself to heaven alone," said one of the priests, with a sanctimonious whine.

"No, no," replied my mother; "I am too old to be of any use to the convent, and besides I must live for my son's sake. He would never consent to my joining the sisterhood."

"So you thought he would not consent to his sister's entering the St. Ursula, yet you have seen his letter in which he approves of the project, and is quite willing that her share of wealth should be appropriated as her portion. I am certain, that if he only knew your desires, he would not refuse his consent."

This was rather startling news to myself. It appeared that I had been written to, and consented to my sister Sophia's becoming a nun, and yet I knew nothing about the matter.

"It is singular," murmured my mother, in an audible tone, "his father was very much opposed to your religion, and Charles appeared to be."

"Foreign travel always has a beneficial effect on Protestants,

They visit Europe, examine our churches, and see that in all Catholic countries the people are happy and contented, without a desire for change. It would not surprise me if your son joined the order if he goes to Rome. With his position and influence in this country, he could not fail to become eminent in our society."

"I will wait until he returns to this country before I connect myself with the convent," my mother said, "but I don't see why I should withhold my signature from the document. If Sophia is contented and has no desire to mix again with the world, perhaps it is right that her fortune should go to help your institution. If you will hand me the pen, I will affix my signature," and as the ready priest dipped the pen into the ink, I thought it was about time to interfere.

Noiselessly I opened the door and glided into the room. So busy were all parties that my entrance was not noticed, and my mother had already taken the pen and was looking for the place to sign her name, when I laid my hand softly on her arm, and she looked up.

With a wild cry of joy my mother started to her feet, hurled the pen to the farther end of the room, and the next instant her arms were around my neck, and I was clasped to her heart, while the two priests exchanged looks of consternation and anger.

For a few minutes we stood silent. My mother was sobbing on my breast, and the disinterested Catholic gentlemen speechless with astonishment. Gently seating the lady in her chair, and with my hands clasped in hers, I turned coldly towards the visitors, and politely requested to know their business. Neither were inclined to speak, but my mother answered for them.

"These, Charles, are two gentlemen, Catholic priests belonging to the Convent of St. Ursula, where your sister Sophia has lately taken the vows and become a nun. You will recollect that we wrote to you about it, and you returned an answer that you were perfectly willing."

The priests exchanged glances as much as to say, "now look out for an explosion." In fact, they slightly moved towards the door, as though they would take their departure, but that I did not wish.

"One moment, gentlemen," I said. "Which of you forged the letter that my mother supposed emanated from myself?"

"Forged a letter?" cried my mother in astonishment. "Why, Charles, what do you mean?"

"Simply, that I never heard of my sister's intention of joining the convent, and that if I had, I would never have consented to her taking such a step. Now, which of you gentlemen forged the letter and persuaded this lady that I wrote it?"

"But, Charles, there is the letter, post-marked Paris, and in your handwriting. Here, read for yourself," and she picked up a paper from the table, and handed it to me.

In truth it was a cunning scheme, and had been very successful. There was the letter, carefully worded, and written in characters so nearly like my own, that I could not tell the signature from a bona fide one. The post-mark, too, was correct, but that was easily accounted for. He had given the letter in charge to some of their friends, who had taken it to Paris, and there mailed it for my mother. But why had I never received the letters announcing the change, and asking my approval of the scheme?

"Now," asked my mother, "are you satisfied who wrote the letter?"

"I am more than ever satisfied that there has been some villany in this matter, and I will sift the affair thoroughly. I never wrote that letter, mother, neither did I ever receive yours asking for Sophia's incarceration."

"There is some mistake, here, young sir," said one of the priests. "Young gentlemen, when travelling in Europe, often do things which they have no recollection of the next twenty-four hours."

"This letter does not look as though it was written by a drunken or crazy man. The letters are too carefully formed. Which of you wrote this at the convent?"

"The young man is growing insulting," said the most timid looking of the two. "We had better retire."

"Pray do so, gentlemen, or I shall assist you down the stairs in a way you will not like. And, harkee, forgers, when you reach the convent, send my sister home without delay, or woe betide you!"

"Your sister has taken the white veil, and bequeathed her fortune to our order. There is her letter and her signature. Read for yourself."

"More forgeries. Do as I said—restore her before twenty-four hours, or ill will happen to you. Go, now—I've defeated your plot, and there's no more hope for you in this house."

"Insolence. Do you dare threaten two members of the holy order? Boy, you shall yet live to repent and ask our pardon on your bended knees."

I laughed scornfully, but fearing that the scene would be too much for my mother's feeble health, I forbore to kick them down stairs, as they deserved. In a short time they had gathered up their papers, and with a low bow to my mother and a look of hatred to myself, they left the room, when I turned and seated myself by the side of my parent.

"Now, mother, give me some explanation of this scene. How does it happen that I return, expecting to be welcomed by a beloved sister, and find that she is an inmate of a convent?"

"My dear son," she said, "Sophia, about two years since, went there to school to get a thorough education in music, and other accomplishments. I used to call there frequently, to see what progress she made, and thus became acquainted with the two priests, who are at the head of the institution. Sophia spoke in terms of praise of the establishment, and one day, after she had been there little over a year, suggested the idea of taking the veil, and becoming an inmate for life. I refused to listen to her for a moment, and then those two priests broached the subject, and tired at length of your sister's entreaties, I promised my consent, provided they could obtain yours. Sophia and I wrote at the same time, and gave the letters to Father Andre to mail."

"Which letters I never received, for they were not sent," I cried, interrupting her.

"I can well believe you, Charles, after what I have heard. In a few months, a letter was placed in my hands, purporting to be written by you; but there is the letter. You have read it, and know its contents. Sophia also received one, and the same sentiments were expressed in hers that mine contained. After receiving the

letter, I no longer withheld my consent, and two weeks since I saw your sister for the last time on earth."

"No, mother, not for the last time. Sophia must leave that place, and immediately."

"But she cannot, Charles. She is bound by a vow, and no law of the Commonwealth can secure her release. I am grieved that I consented, but there was so much influence brought to bear against me, that I could not withstand it. Pardon me, my son, but your mother is growing old, and I fear my intellect is not so strong as it was when you were but a child."

"And Sophia's fortune is to go to the convent, mother?"

"That is what they require, and what Sophia desires in a note she sent me to-day."

"More forgeries, mother. I am glad I interrupted you before they had time to obtain your signature. If I can see Sophia, and she expressly desires her fortune to go to the Convent, she shall be gratified. But I shall see her first."

"That is impossible Charles. No member of the family is allowed to speak to her. But you can correspond if you wish, although all your letters must be perused by the Lady Superior before Sophia sees them."

"That will not suit me. I must see her alone."

"Impossible, Charles. I have asked for the same privilege, but been denied; and if you had remained absent a year longer, I know not but they would have persuaded me to have also entered. Sophia would not have joined, had it not been for the persuasions of Marie Page, who entered the Convent, and took the veil little over a year ago."

"What!" I cried, in astonishment, "has pretty little Marie Page become a nun—with her pleasant smile, and handsome face? We were playmates together."

"Yes, she was persuaded to take the veil, although it almost broke her father's heart. Sophia always had a great friendship for her, and to prove it, I suppose, consented to share her captivity. There was some talk among the girls, I believe, about your marrying Marie when you returned from your travels, but then they heard, some way or other, that you was not conducting your-

self as you should have done while you were in Paris, and I think they mentioned something about an opera-dancer, who had turned your head. At any rate, little Marie, when she heard of it, had a sudden fancy for a convent life, although I told the girls it was all scandal, and that you would never disgrace the blood of the Frothinghams by such a dishonorable course."

"You did right, Mother," I replied, but I turned away my head while speaking, for fear she would see the blush of shame that mantled to my cheeks, for I could not deny the truth of the rumor, and I did not wish to make my mother a lady-confessor.

"But come, Charles," she said at length, "you must be fatigued and stand in need of refreshments. I need not ask if you are well, your looks plainly show that you are."

"One word, mother. Am I to be considered as the head of the family, and will you be guided by me in this unfortunate affair of Sophia's?"

"Certainly, child. The house is yours—do as you please in it."

"Then I must request you to dismiss every Irish domestic, immediately."

"I have only two, and they were taken from the convent, strongly recommended by the Lady Superior. But do as you please. You will find your room as you left it. Go and get a lunch, and then join me in my chamber. I am too feeble to bear much now, and need rest after excitement."

I assisted her to the door, and then went down the broad, oaken stairs, when I saw that the carriage was still standing at the door, and the coachman sitting on the doorsteps whistling a popular air, and seeing how near he could come to a fly's head, with his whip-lash. I then recollected that I had forgotten to pay him for bringing me from Boston, in my eagerness to see my mother.

The instant I opened the door, the man sprang to his feet, and for the first time I looked at his face. It appeared to me that I had seen him somewhere, and yet I could not call to mind where. He was an American I knew, with a bright, open countenance, and an acute expression in his eyes that prepossessed me in his favor.

"How much am I indebted to you, my man?" I said, as I opened the door.

“Not a great deal, Mr. Charles,” he said, with a pleasant smile.

“You know my name then!”

“I should think I had ought to.”

“Why should you?”

“Because before you went to Europe, I lived in this same old house, and many is the time I have robbed orchards, and shared the fruit with you!”

“What! is it possible that you are little Jack Hart?” I cried, looking at his sturdy form in astonishment.

“I was little Jack Hart, sir, when you went to Europe, but three years makes some difference with a fellow that has a good appetite, and a sharp set of teeth, to eat what is set before him.”

“And why did you leave my mother’s service after I went away?”

“Oh! it was them priests’ fault. When your sister spoke of going to the convent, why I spoke agin it, and so they asked your mother to discharge me, and faith she did, without asking my advice, but at the same time she gave me money to start in life, so I turned coachman, and had the honor of driving you from Boston, for which I shall charge you nothing.”

“Thank you Jack, but I shall not accept of your liberality.”

“But I insist, sir.”

“Well, I will accept, provided you enter my service for two or three weeks.”

“But what shall I do with my horses and carriage?”

“I want them also. There is plenty of room in the carriage-house, as you well know.”

“Then, sir, I’m yours, horses and all. What do you want me to do first?”

“Go and find two American domestics, to take the place of the Catholic tools in the house,” I said.

“If that is the first order, it certainly is a good one. I’ve got two sisters who will come, and no mistake. I’ll be back with them in an hour’s time,” and Jack sprang upon the box and drove off with many crackings of his whip, and audible chuckles at the prospect of ridding the premises of his enemies.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SHADOW ON THE WALL.

It was near midnight, when I sat alone in the large chamber where I had so suddenly disturbed the plotting priests. There were many papers that required to be examined, and many letters to write, which had occupied me till a late hour. The house was quiet, and not a soul excepting myself was awake.

My mother had long since retired to rest, while Jack, after installing his sisters, and discharging the other servants, had gone to his room, and was very probably dreaming of the situation of coachman to the family, a birth which he aspired to.

I was tired with the fatigues of the day, and leaning back my head, thought of the difficulties I should experience in obtaining the release of my sister, and Miss Page from the convent. The more I thought of the latter, the more anxious did I feel to see her once more, acknowledge the few faults I had been guilty of, and ask for a renewal of the confidence that formerly existed between us. My thoughts wandered to days long past, when as children, we played together, and I closed my eyes to shut out the fearful destiny of two young, warm-hearted, and confiding girls, being incarcerated for life. How long I remained with my eyes closed, I could not tell. I was not asleep. Every sense was as alert as though it had been noon-day, and yet I could hardly believe my eyes, when, on opening them, I saw a shadow on the

wall opposite to me, and the figure of an arm raised, grasping a long knife in its hand.

I did not start, or move. I sat gazing at the spectacle with astonishment, not unmixed with alarm. I watched the arm and body of a man slowly move back and forth, yet apparently hesitating to strike me dead with the weapon, until a cold, damp perspiration gathered on my brow, and my heart beat as though it would force itself through my side. I could see the figure steal along, creeping carefully, and then stop and listen to my breathing, as though to be certain that I slept, and then I saw the phantom bend forward to peer into my face, and get a glimpse of my eyes.

My nocturnal enemy at last appeared satisfied that I slept, for suddenly the dagger was raised high in the air, and the next instant I should have fallen a corpse to the floor, but with a wild cry I sprang to my feet, and confronted my adversary.

I heard him utter an exclamation of astonishment—I saw the fierce features of the priest Andre, and then with a crash the light fell to the floor, and the room was in darkness.

"Vile dog," I shouted, "would you add assassination to your other crimes?"

There was a low laugh, and then I heard the door softly open, and the cool air came sweeping in, cooling my heated brow, and restoring me to my senses. I sprang madly after the priest, reached the entry, and then paused to listen. The same scornful laugh came from the stairs leading to the outside door, and down those I plunged at the hazard of breaking my neck, but before I reached the foot of the flight, the outer door was opened, and then carefully closed, and I heard the key grating in the lock. I tried to open it, but found that the villain had, to prevent pursuit, locked the door on the outside.

I threw my whole weight against the panels, but they were made of good oak, and resisted my efforts, desperate as they were.

Determined not to be frustrated in my pursuit, I tried the parlor door; that also was locked, but it was not composed of the same sturdy materials as the other one, and it gave way to the pressure I brought against it, and flew open. I ran to the win-

dow, cleared the fastenings, and threw it up ; wrenched open the blinds, and leaped lightly on the green sward in front of the house. The night was beautifully clear, with a full moon sailing overhead. Yet not a soul was to be seen in the streets.

I ran wildly up and down, first one way and then another, yet I did not meet a soul ; and tired and vexed, I returned to the house, found the key in the front door where the priest had left it, and after securing the window, and searching the rooms, retired to rest, to dream of convents and diabolical priests.

The next morning at breakfast, I did not acquaint my mother with my night's adventure, as I thought her health was too delicate to be disturbed ; but Jack shared my confidence, and the honest fellow vowed that he would sleep hereafter with a pitchfork by his side, so as to be ready for visitors whether priests or devils.

As for myself, I loaded my pistols carefully, and determined to carry them about my person in future, as I knew that there was too large a stake at issue, to be relinquished without an effort.

CHAPTER V.

JACK AND MYSELF TAKE TO SCHEMING.

A week or more had passed away, since I had nearly become a victim to assassination. I had written two very calm notes to the Lady Superior of the Convent, requesting the immediate dismissal of my sister, and also had persuaded our neighbors, the Pages, to apply for Marie's discharge; but both applications had been treated with contempt. The Superior would neither allow us to converse with our relatives, or agree to deliver a letter to them.

One evening, after returning from an unsuccessful attempt to get a writ issued for the Lady Superior to show cause why the body of Sophia Frothingham should not be brought before the court, and set at liberty, I threw myself upon a lounge, sick at heart, and hardly knowing what I should do next.

"Still unsuccessful?" asked Jack, as he busied himself in the room, and cast an anxious glance towards my troubled face.

"There's no hope, Jack; Sophia will have to remain there for life."

"I don't see why she should, sir, when she can be got out."

"And how, pray, do you think she can be got out?"

"Simply by going there and taking her by force, or stealing her away during the night."

"It cannot be done, Jack, by force; but I'm not certain the latter plan might not be adopted!"

"To be sure it can, sir," Jack said, his face brightening, and he rubbed his hands with glee at the thought.

"Do you know that the convent is guarded by dogs and men?"

"And devils in the inside, sir."

"The dogs would raise an alarm by their barking," I said, in a musing tone.

"I will take care of that, sir."

"How?"

"No matter, sir; just say you'll go and make the attempt, and count me in with you."

"I will think of it, Jack," I answered.

"There's no time to think of it, sir. Say the word, and to-morrow night we'll make the attempt. I need only a few hours to get ready."

"Then, Jack, to-morrow night we will see what can be done. We shall not want to start before ten o'clock, and by that time every one will have retired for the night in the convent. Say nothing, but make all needful preparations. Above all, do not excite the suspicions of my mother that I am going to engage in any such enterprise."

"Never fear me; I know how to keep a quiet tongue," and Jack left the room, overjoyed to think that there was an adventure in prospective.

CHAPTER VI.

HOW I GET INTO THE CONVENT, AND TRY TO GET OUT.

The next day Jack was absent from home until nearly sundown. He had given me no intimation of his designs, or how he was to manage the dogs, whose noisy barking, I was fearful would alarm the inmates of the convent, and bring a squad of priests and servants down upon us, whom it would have been dangerous to encounter.

To my relief, however, Jack made his appearance at last, bearing a small wooden box under his arm, which he said contained enough to quiet all the dogs in Charlestown.

I did not question him as to its contents, because I suspected what it contained. Bidding him be ready to set forth at nine o'clock, I retired to the library and there wrote a letter to my mother, telling her what I had undertaken, and in case I should not return the next day, where she would be likely to find me, either a prisoner or a corpse.

The letter I gave to one of Jack's sisters, with the directions not to deliver it until the next morning, in case I did not return, and then, as the clock struck nine, we sallied forth.

The night was dark, without a star to light us on our way; but

this we rather preferred, as it would serve to screen us from observation.

On we went, stumbling along the rough roads, not meeting a soul to exchange salutations with, until the huge brick building of the Convent of St. Ursula came in sight, with not a light or a cheerful gleam issuing from the iron-grated windows.

We silently clambered over the high wall, and picked our way towards the rear of the building. The only sound stirring was the prolonged howl of a dog, who appeared to have taken his position near one of the wings, and at regular periods sent forth his doleful cry.

"There's some one dead in the convent, sir," Jack whispered, as we halted under the shadow of a tree to listen.

"Why do you think so, Jack?" I asked with some curiosity.

"Because, sir, you never hear a dog howl like that near a building, without death being inside."

"You are superstitious, Jack. Let us on, and effect an entrance through the window."

"Not so fast, sir; I have spent some portion of the day in examining the building, and have also talked with a mason, who helped to lay the foundation of the convent. He let me into a secret if I would pay for the liquor, and that I willingly did, because I was dry myself. No, sir; let us stay under the shade of this tree, until we have cleared the dogs from our path."

"And how are we to do that?"

"You get up into the tree, sir, and take the box, and then I'll call them."

I saw the force of his remark, and without a word, caught at a branch and seated myself; then taking the box from Jack's hand, I waited for him to give the alarm.

In a few moments Jack uttered a peculiar yell, that sounded more like the bark of a fox than anything else. The howling dog ceased his cry, and all for a few minutes was still. Another yell from Jack, and then half-a-dozen dogs uttered quick, shrill barks, and we could hear them bounding towards the tree.

"Now, sir, I'll roost alongside of you for a while," Jack said, and he swung himself on to the same branch on which I was seated.

He had hardly gained his position, before the animals reached the base of the tree, yelling with anger at their prey being beyond their reach.

"Ah, ha!" laughed Jack, "don't you wish you may get us, hey?"

"They will awaken the inmates of the convent," I said; "give them their dose, and put a stop to their confounded noise."

"Pass me the box, sir, and I'll fix 'em," Jack said.

I handed the box to him, and he commenced throwing pieces of fresh meat to the hungry crowd below. We could hear the brutes quarrelling, as junk after junk fell to the earth, and by the angry snapping of their jaws, we knew that they were swallowing the pieces without stopping to masticate them.

It did not take long to exhaust the contents of the box, and after the last piece had been thrown, we sat waiting for the poison to operate. The night was so dark we could scarcely distinguish the animals as they walked about beneath us; yet, by straining our eyes, we could observe that they felt rather uneasy after their meal, and presently one laid down on his side, and uttered a low howl of agony.

"The poison is working," Jack whispered.

I made no reply to his remark, but closely watched for another dog to follow the example of his companion, and in this respect I was soon gratified. One by one they fell, yelling and biting the grass in their agony, and uttering plaintive howls, which sounded mournful, and made me half repent the deed we had committed.

"I think we can get down now, sir," Jack said; "they don't feel much like running, I'll warrant you."

As he spoke, he threw away the box, and sprang to the earth, where I quickly followed him.

The poison had done its work too well to meet with any further opposition from the dogs, although the poor brutes did stagger to their feet, and try to give warning to their masters that there was some mischief intended; but their energy was gone—the drug was feeding on their vitals, and after an unsuccessful attempt to bite, they would once more fall panting to the ground, and after a few moans, give up the ghost.

"Now, Jack," I said, after a few minutes' pause, "if we can only be as successful in our affair at the convent as we have been with the dogs, we shall be fortunate."

"We should, sir, if you would only consent to give the priests the same dose that the poor brutes have just taken."

"No, no, Jack, no violence; remember I have left my pistols at home, because I thought I might forget myself, and use them."

"We are very thankful you did so," cried a well known voice at my side, and before I could turn, I received a blow on the head that caused me to see more stars than there were at that particular moment on exhibition in the heavens.

I fell heavily, and as I struck the ground, two strong men threw themselves on my person, and sought to bind my hands with stout cords. I was young and active, with limbs well strung with nerves and muscle, and did not submit so tamely as they expected.

Grasping one of my assailants by the throat, I threw him off my breast, and had partly risen to my feet, dragging one of my antagonists with me, when I again heard the priest's voice, crying—

"Kill him, if he resists—remember, he is but a heretic, I'll give you absolution for all you do," and then I saw a sudden flash of light, as a dark lantern was produced by the priest, and by its glare I observed Jack clearing himself from the grasp of two gigantic servants, and dart off across the park, closely followed by the convent's men.

I still struggled against the two ruffians, and should have freed myself from their grasp, had not Andre, suddenly losing all patience, picked up a club, and with a blow on the head, stretched me senseless.

How long I had been unconscious I could not tell, but when I awoke, as from a dream, my head pained me exceedingly, and for a time I knew not where I was; but by degrees, a consciousness of my situation awakened the full extent of my danger.

I hardly knew to what extremes the priests would resort; but then I recollected that Jack had probably made his escape, and would certainly bring aid as soon as he found that I was not released.

This assurance was comforting, but I had read of convents, and knew very well that they had secret cells, where prisoners could be placed, and the public none the wiser, let them search ever so long.

Determined to know the extent of my danger, I struggled to my feet, and groped along the rugged walls, damp with mildew and cold as ice. The cell appeared to be about ten feet wide, and I was about to see how long, when my attention was arrested by a hollow sound, as though something had fallen into a deep well.

I paused suddenly, and listened. I could hear the trickling of water, and again I moved my left hand, which I had placed against the wall to steady myself. Some loose dirt was dislodged and fell, and with a beating heart, I heard it strike the surface of water, many feet below me.

The truth flashed across my mind at once. I had been placed in a cell where there was an old well, in the hopes that I should fall into it, and of course, after I was once in, who would hear my cries for assistance?

I started back from my dangerous position as quick as possible, and as I did so, I heard a slight noise at the other end of my prison, as though some one was trying to force a door open.

"Another trick of the enemy," I thought; but still I listened with breathless attention, and kept my eyes fastened in the direction of the sound.

There was the grating of a file, and then all was still for a few minutes. Soon, however, I heard a heavy blow struck, and then I felt a current of cold air pass into the cell, and I knew at once that there was some one trying to force an entrance into my dungeon.

"Cuss me, if this don't beat driving horses," I heard a familiar voice say, and the next moment my eyes were blinded by a bright light; but I knew that Jack had found some way of entering, and was hastening to my relief.

CHAPTER VII.

WE START ON A VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY, AND ARE MISTAKEN FOR DEVILS.

In a few minutes I was seated by the side of my friend, Jack, listening to his story, and the manner in which he effected his escape.

“When I shook myself clear from the two polite gentlemen who were anxious for me to accompany them to this large and popular establishment, I ran until I had lost sight of my pursuers, and then turned, and went in the direction I supposed they would take you.

“When I got within sight of the ruffians, I found that they were carrying you ; so I supposed that you must be hurt, and badly, too, for I heard you groan, and then the villains laughed.

“I followed on, until I saw them enter the convent, and then waited outside to see in what room they would leave you. By watching the lights, I was enabled to trace them to this room, and then the information that the mason gave me about there being a subterraneous passage, leading into the building, convinced me that if I could get into it, I might effect your escape, and the

ladies' also ; for now that they think they have got the only plotter in custody, why, the priests will be very apt to go to bed.

"I luckily had a dark lantern with me, so striking a light, I searched round, and by the directions which I had received from the mason, I was enabled to find the entrance, covered up by a large flat stone. I boldly entered, and found nothing to impede my progress, until I reached that iron door, which required considerable filing before the lock would yield, You know the rest. Now what shall we do? Go ahead, or retreat?"

"We will retreat, Jack, only when I take my sister with me."

"And another young lady, sir, in her company."

"If it is possible, Jack ; but hold your light, and see how near I came fulfilling the wishes of my enemies."

Jack held the lantern in the direction I indicated, and the honest fellow started back with horror at my narrow escape.

"Ah, they thought you would be your own executioner ; but thank God, they are foiled thus far."

"Now, Jack, let's find a door to lead us out of this dungeon," and as I spoke, I took the lantern from his hand, and began to examine the walls of the room.

"Ah, here is the door, Jack ; but how are we to open it?"

"Leave that to me, sir ; I'm something of a blacksmith as well as coachman," and Jack took from his pocket a small piece of iron rod and inserted it in the keyhole of the iron door before him.

He worked carefully and energetically for a few minutes, and then stopping, he poured a small quantity of oil on the iron, and re-commenced operations. Three or four times did he apply the oil before the bolt slipped from its socket, and the heavy door swung on its hinges, and revealed a long, narrow passage, paved with flat stones.

"This is just as my friend, the mason, told me I should find things, so I came prepared. Now we have a retreat, in case of need, and if we should find your sister or the other lady, what could be better than making our escape this way?"

"You are a jewel, Jack," I whispered ; "let us on as fast as possible ; it must be long past midnight."

"So much the better, sir, for the priests will sleep the sounder. But I am ready."

We moved forward for about twenty feet, and then ascended a flight of eight stone steps, which were damp and slippery with slime. Here we encountered another door, but the materials of this one were composed of wood. Jack's lock-picker was again put into requisition, and without much difficulty the door was opened, and we stood in a small room, furnished with a lounge and a range of shelves. On the latter were books, and masks, and wigs, both dark and grey, while hanging near at hand were a pair of fine duelling pistols and a dagger.

"This must be a room used by the priests when they wish to disguise themselves before leaving by the secret passage," I whispered to Jack, who made no reply, but with a significant gesture, took the pistols and dagger from the wall, and placed them in his bosom.

We were about to try the door leading from this room, when we both started and listened attentively, to a low monotonous voice, but a short distance from us.

Shading the light from the lantern, we crept silently forward, and listened. A voice, apparently that of a female, was reciting some words, often interrupted by tears and sobs, which came as from a wounded heart. By looking through the key-hole, I could see there was a dim light in the room, and that there was some object dressed in white lying on a table, with a candle placed at its head. By its side was a woman in a kneeling position, reciting prayers, with her head buried in her hands.

It was necessary for us to pass into that room to continue our search; but still we did not wish to alarm the girl, fearful that she would awaken the inmates of the convent.

I whispered my thoughts to Jack, and for a short time we held a consultation as to what should be done. Retreat we would not, while, if the girl was taken with screaming, we knew that we should be obliged to flee for our lives. While we were undecided, I placed my hand softly on the lock of the door, and to my surprise it opened noiselessly. Either the priests had too much con-

fidence in the girl to think that she would attempt an escape, or else they had forgotten to secure it.

So quiet was our entrance that the girl did not hear us, and as her back was towards us, we advanced on tip-toe, and stood beside her undiscovered.

We then saw that the watcher was praying beside a corpse, arrayed in grave clothes, with a huge cross lying on her breast. The deceased was, apparently, a young girl, and she looked as though enjoying a sweet sleep, with her delicate hands crossed on her breast, and her pure, classical face reminded me of paintings I had seen in Europe.

For a few moments, Jack and myself stood seeking counsel in each other's face, and hardly knowing what to do. Suddenly the watcher ceased her prayers, and arose to her feet, with her eyes fixed on the dead nun's face, unconscious of our presence.

After contemplating the deceased for a moment, she sighed heavily, and was about to retire, when her eyes fell upon me. She started back with a low cry of surprise, and then turning, would have fled; but I seized her by one of her hands and detained her. In an instant she was on her knees, begging, and bewildered with terror.

"For the Virgin's sake, release me!" she said. "I am most guilty, and totally unfit to die. If you are devils, there are others who deserve death more than me. Spare me, I pray you, spare me!" and she dashed her head to the stone floor, and shivered with terror.

"Well, sir, in all my life, this is the first time I was ever taken for a devil," Jack said, with a rueful look; "now you don't exactly look human, sir, with the blood unwashed from your face, and I don't blame the girl for being frightened."

I then thought for the first time, of the wound on my head, and of the blood which had oozed from it on to my face. There was no time, however, to make apologies for one's toilet, so I stooped down and gently raised the watcher to her feet, and in a calm tone of voice, told her who we were, and what our errand was.

By degrees she began to comprehend my meaning, and her tears ceased. When I told her that I was Sophia's brother, and was

determined not to leave the convent without her, the nun clasped her hands with joy, as she said—

“Are you indeed Sophia’s brother? Remember it would be cruel to deceive me.”

“I’ll take my Bible oath, marm, that he is,” Jack said.

“And you are determined to take her from the convent?”

“Not only my sister, but Miss Page, if I can see her.”

“Are you the lover of Marie?” she asked.

“I have not that honor, but I have known her for a long time, and highly esteem her.”

“Then you are the one on whose account she took the veil. I know all, Mr. Frothingham, and let me tell you that it would be better to leave her within these gloomy walls, than let her know you love another. I will assist you to save your sister, but let Marie remain.”

“And are they both as pure as when they entered this accursed abode?” I asked, trembling with anxiety.

“Up to this time they have been, but how much longer they would have been spared, I cannot tell,” and the nun buried her face in her hands, and re-commenced weeping bitterly.

“Thank God that I am in time! Lead me quickly to my sister, for in a few hours we shall have daylight, and then I shall be lost, and all hopes of saving Sophia destroyed.”

“Are you content to leave Marie?” she asked.

“No, she too must go.”

“Then I will not aid you; her heart is nearly broken now by the sad stories they have told her about your career while in Paris. She is learning to forget you, and in time will.”

“But if I should say that I would make her my wife after her escape, would that change your opinion?”

“And will you do so?”

“I swear that I will, if she is as pure as when she entered the convent.”

“I can vouch for that. But here, lay your hand on this cross, clasped by the dead nun’s hands, and vow that you will be true to her, and take no advantage of my confession.”

The nun took my hand, and placed it on the cross, so that my

fingers came in contact with the dead girl's icy-cold hand. I started back in terror, but a reproachful look from my companion re-assured me, and I uttered the oath.

"Make him swear, marm, to keep me as coachman, with a free run of the larder," Jack said.

The nun scowled at Jack, as she replied—

"I have one more condition ; I also must effect my escape, and be dependent upon your sister's bounty for a few days, until my friends can come to my relief."

"The more the merrier, marm," Jack said, with enthusiasm ; "let's release the whole of the nuns!"

"That is impossible ; besides, you have dangerous work to release the two ladies you have spoken of."

"I readily consent to your accompanying Sophia, and will do all in my power to help you reach your friends in safety," I said, hastily, fearful that Jack would next propose to fire the convent, for the purpose of getting the ladies out.

"That is a sufficient guaranty, sir. Now for the difficulties to be encountered. The room adjoining is a chapel ; leading from that, is the chamber of the priest, Andre, who is easily disturbed ; he must be gagged and bound, for we shall be obliged to pass near him. At his head is the rope leading to the signal bell ; one touch of that cord would awaken every servant in the convent ; and you two could not hope to cope with half-a-dozen giants, under the direction of a man who has no heart, conscience or mercy. Do you understand me!"

"Perfectly," I answered calmly.

"And you and your friend are willing to undertake the risk?"

Jack stretched out his hand, which I shook cordially, and the nun read in that act our determination to proceed, at every hazard.

"Then follow me," the girl said, leading the way towards a door.

"Stop one moment," I said ; how know we that you will not lead us to destruction."

She smiled scornfully, as her large black eyes met my searching gaze.

"Do I look like one who would betray a friend or stranger?"

"No, no; but—"

"But you mistrust me—is it not so?"

"No; but the circumstance of finding you here alone with the corpse, and your readiness to lead us to the priest's room, may prove but a trap."

"I blame you not for doubting everything in this cursed abode. Me you can trust, young man, and I have my own private reasons for wishing to escape."

"You have been wronged, then?"

The nun's face flushed with suppressed rage, as she answered—

"I have."

"But how came you here at this time of night?"

"I was sentenced to do penance by the villain Andre. To gratify his spite, I was ordered by the Lady Superior to watch by the side of that poor girl, who died of a broken heart. Little did I think, while I prayed by her inanimate side, that God would hear my prayers, and send deliverance."

"I am satisfied," I replied, "and am ready to follow you wherever you lead."

"Then let us hasten; but first take these cords, for you will need them," and she picked up a number of small pieces of rope from a corner of the room, and placed them in my hands.

With a renewed caution to tread lightly, the nun glided through the door, lighting the way with the candle which she had taken from the head of the dead girl.

We passed into the chapel, before the altar of which a large wax candle was shedding a dim light, and the next instant our guide stopped before a small door, which was partly open. Shading the light with her hand, so that not a gleam could penetrate into the chamber, she nodded her head in that direction, and in a low whisper bade us enter.

I carefully pushed the door open, and closely followed by Jack, entered. Quiet as we were, the priest was awakened, and, starting up in bed, demanded, in a hoarse voice, who we were.

"A friend," replied Jack, in a low voice.

"Is it you, Agnes?" the man said, thinking some one was visiting him who had often done so.

At this instant our guide allowed the light to flash into the room, and the priest saw that the intruders were men instead of women.

"Ah!" he cried, in surprise, "there is some treachery here; surrender, if you hope for mercy at my hands," and the priest reached his hand towards the bell-rope; but at that instant, a club descended upon his unprotected head, wielded by the strong arms of Jack, and he fell back with a heavy groan.

"You did wrong, Jack," I said. We could have gagged and bound him without inflicting injury."

"I wanted to pay him off for old scores, sir. Remember that you have an awkward bruise on your head which should be charged to his account."

"Is he dead?" the nun said, holding the light to the priest's eyes.

"No, there is no danger of his dying. He will soon revive."

"Better if he never did. He deserves death, but perhaps not at your hands. Hush!" she cried, suddenly, as I was about to speak, "the nuns have assembled in the large hall and are about to chant their morning prayer. The hour of two must be past, yet I thought it not so late."

I listened attentively and could hear numerous voices repeating in a listless tone the words:

"May the Virgin always guard us,
May the Virgin hear our prayers,
She was pure in her conception,"

"Go on with your work, or we shall soon be interrupted," the nun said, after we had listened to the three lines. "The Superior will soon be here to arouse the priest."

We waited not for a second bidding. Jack grasped the insensible man's head while I took hold of his feet, and thus bore him through the chapel in the room adjoining to one where the dead nun was lying.

Half a dozen cords were then passed around his wrists and feet, so that escape was impossible, and we hurried back to the chapel.

"Here, on with these," cried our guide, bringing two loose black robes from the priest's room. "Put these on and haul the cowl over your faces and you will pass an inspection."

Without a word of remonstrance we hurried on the black robes with a large red cross worked on the breast, and then looked towards the nun for further instructions.

"Will you wait here until I speak to the two ladies, or will you go with me into the hall where they are all assembled?"

"Can I pass into the hall without being detected?" I asked.

"Yes. The Lady Superior is half asleep, and the nuns are in the same situation."

"Then I will go. Do you, Jack, guard the priest until my return."

This did not exactly suit him, but as only one could go in the place of the priest (Maloney being absent) I thought I could assume the duties much better than Jack. He went back to where Andre was lying, with a bad grace, while I walked solemnly and thoughtfully on in company with the nun.

"When you enter the hall," the girl said, "be sure and keep the cowl over your face; take a seat near the Lady Superior, who will be seated half asleep near the head of the hall where the image of the Virgin and Christ are. If she ask any questions pretend that you are counting your beads, or mutter something in a low voice so that she cannot hear what you say. I, in the meantime, will speak to Marie and Sophia, and get them to retire to the room, where the priest is, and then all escape together."

As she ceased speaking, we reached the door which she opened carefully, and then I heard the nuns repeating in a sleepy, drawling tone,

"Mary is the mother of God,
We are in thy holy keeping, O Virgin,
We dedicate ourselves to thee."

As I entered two or three young and beautiful girls raised their eyes, and looked up for a moment with a sleepy gaze, but apparently satisfied that I was the right priest, they again dropped their heads on their breasts and recommenced counting their beads.

There were quite a number of nuns in a kneeling position, with nothing but the hard, marble floor to rest their delicate limbs on. At the farther end of the apartment, with a wax candle each side of her, sat the Lady Superior, with her head thrown back against a high, softly cushioned chair, and her eyes closed.

I slowly made my way through the ranks of kneeling girls, and calmly took a seat on the right of the Superior. The lady opened her eyes, and said, in a languid tone.

"I did not call you as I thought you needed rest, holy father, after your night's labor."

"Ough!" I grunted, without daring to trust my voice to make a direct answer.

"The villain is safe, I hope, Andre?" she said.

"Ough!" I again-exclaimed, counting the beads which hung to my dress, with desperate energy.

"I am glad to hear it. We can't be too careful now-a-days. The devil appears to have infected the girls lately. I believe they would all make their escape if they could."

"Ough!" I replied.

"Are you not a little hoarse this morning, Father?"

"Ough!"

"Then come to my room after the services, and I will give you a glass of my cordial that will entirely cure you."

I again gave my ready answer, when the Superior, perhaps wishing for a glass herself, said:

"You shall have some now, Father. Sister Antoinette will go to my room and bring a square, cut glass bottle, from the shelf, on the right hand corner of the closet."

A form silently rose and went to do the bidding of the Superior. The messenger was not absent more than a minute, and to my delight, my neighbor did not say a word while she was gone. The girl approached me with a glass and bottle, and while she was pouring out a bright red liquid, I looked up and saw that my cup bearer was Marie.

I could not repress an exclamation of astonishment, but slight as it was, the Superior saw it.

"Be quick, you jade," she said, in a cross tone of voice; "do you not see that the holy father is suffering with a cold."

The mild, beautiful face of the dear girl did not flush with indignation, or surprise; with a calm steady hand, she approached with the glass and offered it to me. I took the cordial, and as it smelt very nice, slightly threw back my cowl and raised the wine to my lips. At this instant, Marie looked up, and getting a sight of my well known features, covered with blood, she dropped the bottle and fell back with a loud scream, upsetting the *sedate* Lady Superior in her fall, and together they rolled on the floor, amid the suppressed laughter of the assembled nuns.

"Jade," cried the enraged Superior, "you have spilt all of my best wine. You shall do penance. Away with you and watch beside your dead sister until I tell you to leave. Go hussey, go," and she stamped her foot on the floor, and then uttered another howl of agony.

The feet of the Superior were gouty, and she had started the pain afresh with her energy.

"Oh, Father," she said, stooping down and rubbing her shin, "can you tell me what is good for the gout?"

"Ough!" I exclaimed, in a louder voice than before.

I saw that the nun who had guided me to the hall had quietly slipped out of the room with a companion, and my heart told me that it was my sister.

"What did you say was good, Father?" she asked again.

The wine was working in my veins, and I felt just like committing some piece of folly. I knew that Jack and the strange nun would in a few words, explain the position of affairs to the two girls, and of my own safety I felt reckless, now that I thought they were safe.

"You should eat less and exercise more," I said in a gruff voice.

"What?" she exclaimed, looking at me with amazement.

"Eat and drink less—do you understand," I shouted, and tearing off my cowl I revealed to the astonished woman my face covered with blood.

"The devil!" she cried with a screech, and making a rapid sign of the cross.

"The devil," echoed the nuns in chorus, and in an instant they arose from their knees, and rushed like frightened sheep into a corner of the room, when they turned their faces towards me, again yelled louder than before. In their hurry and confusion, many a robe was disarranged and the white neck and shoulder, or arm of a nun would peep out like a statue of Venus scantily clothed.

"Yes, I'm the devil, and all the pretty nuns belong to me. The homely ones the Lady Superior may keep."

This, I thought, would pacify them, but it didn't. The old nuns howled in chorus, and the young ones, thinking to be on the safe side, joined in. I knew that such a noise as that would soon arouse the servants of the convent, so giving one diabolic scream, I darted for the door, leaving the Lady Superior in a fit.

As I rushed along, I tore the black robe from my person, for its folds impeded my flight. I reached the small chapel and gained the room where the priest was still lying bound, but I should hardly have known him had it not been for his dress. Jack, in my absence, wishing to amuse himself, had drawn a respectable pair of whiskers on the man's cheek, and also painted a fierce moustache on his upper lip. The paint used, was blacking, obtained from a lamp that stood near at hand. I merely paused for a second to look at the victim, and received a scowl of hatred from him. Speak he could not, for Jack had thrust a piece of cloth in his mouth that utterly prevented all attempts at conversing.

The alarm was continued in the chapel, and as I gained the cell where I had been placed a prisoner, I heard the alarm bell sounded which was to awaken the convent's guard. By the aid of the lamp, which I had taken the precaution to bring with me from the chapel, I found the door of the subterranean passage open, and through this I darted and pursued my flight along a damp arch, for nearly three hundred feet, when I again encountered a door, also open. After passing this, I stood in the open air and found Jack and the ladies impatiently awaiting my arrival.

CHAPTER VIII.

CONCLUSION.

"The convent is alarmed," cried Jack, as I emerged from the passage. "See the lights flickering in the windows."

"I know it," I answered; "we shall be pursued if we do not seek safety in flight. Take the nun under your charge, Jack, and I will look to the safety of my sister and Marie."

"I can take care of myself," said the nun, in a stern voice. "Lead the way and I will keep close to you."

"How the old fellows are ringing their bells," Jack said, as we passed hastily along across the field, not daring to take the road.

"Let them ring until they are tired—we've got the start, and in this darkness it's doubtful if they can find us."

I had Sophia and Marie hanging on each arm, and encouraged them in whispers to make all the exertion they could. The brave girls although but slightly clad, and with their feet imperfectly protected, struggled on without a murmur, and only gave expression to their thanks for their escape.

On we went, stumbling over stones and logs, until we thought we could safely venture into the highway, and when once on the road we suffered no opposition and in an hour's time I had the satisfaction

of leading the ladies into my mother's presence, who was awakened from a deep sleep to welcome her daughter.

Some refreshments were provided, and while Jack was getting them ready, I dressed my wound, and cleared the blood from my face, and when I again entered the room where the three girls were seated, talking of the danger of their escape, I was saluted with a warm, sisterly embrace from Sophia, while I looked towards Marie to see if she was not disposed to bestow the same boon, but she did not appear to think it was necessary to go through the same ceremony. She gave me her hand, however, and, while the tears stood in her mild eyes, she thanked me for the service I had been to her.

"Remember your vow," said the cold, solemn looking nun, addressing me.

"I do, and am ready to fulfil it any time," I answered.

"A vow—what vow?" asked Sophia.

"A vow I made to this lady, to whom you are indebted for your deliverance."

I saw the cheek of Marie grow pale, and I saw her turn her head so that I could not watch the expression of sorrow that crossed her fine face, and I hastened to explain.

"The vow, Marie, means that if you are willing to forgive my past faults and accept me for a husband, you will never repent of your kindness."

"And then, Marie, you will be my sister," cried Sophia, embracing the embarrassed girl and placing her hand in mine.

"I am satisfied," said the nun, "may you be as happy as you deserve to be. As for myself there is nothing to look forward to, except to cheer the declining years of a father. Thank God, ladies, you have made your escape and are still innocent. I was once, but that was before I entered that unholy retreat. I shall have to depend upon your bounty for a few days, and then I shall leave this part of the country forever," and the nun buried her face in her hands, and wept bitterly.

I left the room, leaving the task of conversation to the two girls, and when I returned they whispered to me her right name, and to

my surprise I found she was the daughter of one of our most eloquent statesmen.

The convent made no attempt to rescue the escaped nuns, and a few months after, the terrible catastrophe, when the convent was burned to the ground, occurred, and Charlestown was once more free of foreign foes.

Jack is still living with me, and has grown grey in my service. He is happy, and still delights to tell about his painting the priest's face.



GENTLEMEN'S,
Youths' & Childrens'
CLOTHING,
FURNISHING GOODS,
HATS, CAPS, &c.
OAK HALL,
Nos. 28 to 38 North Street,
BOSTON, MASS.



WILSON, FAIRBANK & CO.,

43 & 45 HANOVER STREET, BOSTON.

IMPORTERS AND WHOLESALE DEALERS IN

DRUGS AND MEDICINES,

ENGLISH, FRENCH AND AMERICAN CHEMICALS,

AND GLASS WARE,

Wholesale Agents for the Sale of

PURE MEDICINAL EXTRACTS,

PREPARED IN VACUO,

AT THE LABORATORY OF THE UNITED SOCIETY, NEW LEBANON, N. Y.

CIGARS.

We have always on hand a great variety of Brands, and by every importation receive supplies of the best Cigars offered to the public. To proprietors of hotels and to retailers of Cigars and Tobacco, we offer great inducements, having all the favorite brands of common, London, Regalia and Concha sizes.

Fancy Brands of Tobacco in kegs, boxes and foil.

**PROPRIETORS
OF**

**Dr. Conine's Symp of
Ginseng & Malva,**

AGENTS FOR

Dr. JAYNES' MEDICINES

SHAKERS' HERBS,

A fine assortment, warranted fresh, carefully pressed in papers varying in size from ozs. to lb packages.

**Perry Davis & Son's
PAIN KILLER.**

LIQUORS.

For Medicinal Purposes of the purest quality

Brands of all kinds, Schiedam Gin, Wines, &c., imported expressly for our own sales, consequently can be relied on. Bouquet Schiedam Schnapps, an entirely new article in this market, is highly recommended as the purest quality of gin, is contained in convenient packages of 1 doz. bottles in a box.

Holden's Dysentery Cordial, the best remedy extant.

SOLE AGENTS FOR

DR. EASTMAN'S HEAD-ACHE REMEDY,

The popularity of this inestimable preparation is almost without parallel. The extensive sale with which it meets is owing entirely to its success in the cure of the disease for which it is recommended.

John Wilson. — F. D. Fairbank. — D. C. Kimball.

THE BALM

—OF—

THOUSAND FLOWERS!

FOR BEAUTIFYING THE COMPLEXION, AND REMOVING

TAN, FOR SHAVING,

PIMPLES, AND CLEANSING

AND FRECKLES, THE TEETH.

The Balm of Thousand Flowers is a delightful compound, highly and delicately scented by its own ingredients, to be used in the toilet, imparting beauty, comfort and health to the skin. It will effectually remove tan, sunburn, &c., and it imparts a flexible, soft surface to the skin, preventing its shrinking and becoming spotted. By persevering in the directions, the skin will become clear, and remain free from all blemishes and imperfections, precisely as nature intended it to be, preserving a juvenile appearance, even to middle or old age.

For Shaving, this Balm gives a rich, penetrating lather, and has no equal in rendering the beard soft, emolient and tender, so that, in removing it, it gives way at the slightest resistance, to the razor, without producing the least sensation, leaving a fresh, white, and delicate countenance.

For cleansing the teeth, it has been considered far superior and far more medicinal than any compound yet known. It renders them white as alabaster, prevents their decay, and removes the tartar; prevents ulceration, and strengthens the gums.

**Manufactured and for sale by FETRIDGE & Co, 5 State
Street, and 72 & 74 Washington Street, Boston.**

A Splendid Family Newspaper!

PUBLISHED EVERY SATURDAY,

THE AMERICAN UNION,

NO CONTINUED STORIES, NO ADVERTISEMENTS,

EACH NUMBER COMPLETE IN ITSELF!

Terms, \$2 a Year, in Advance.

Subscriptions received by

GRAVES & WESTON,

Publishers.

NO. 36 WASHINGTON STREET, NEAR CORNHILL, BOSTON.

Sold by all Newspaper Dealers in the Country. Single copies 4 cents.

100

100

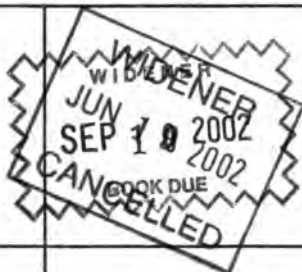


3 2044 018 699 637

The borrower must return this item on or before the last date stamped below. If another user places a recall for this item, the borrower will be notified of the need for an earlier return.

*Non-receipt of overdue notices does **not** exempt the borrower from overdue fines.*

Harvard College Widener Library
Cambridge, MA 02138 617-495-2413



Please handle with care.
Thank you for helping to preserve
library collections at Harvard.

